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ABSTRACT

Volume 5 of the "VCCA Journal" contains the following articles: (1) "Outcomes Assessment Weather Forecast: A Cold Wind Blowing from the North," by David C. Hanson; (2) "The National Endowment for the Humanities Grant at Piedmont Virginia Community College," by Evelyn Edson, Jane Kingston, William Owen, and Samuel Westbrook; (3) "Spring Break in Toronto: Exposing Students to a Global Society," by Quintin S. Doromol, Jr. and Cindy N. Miller; (4) "Toward Shared Values in the Community College Humanities Curriculum," by Samuel B. Olorounto; (5) "Perspectives on Part-Time Teaching in Community Colleges: Pressures, Politics, and Prospects," by Larry Roderer and Betty Weissbecker; (6) "How the Need To Give an International/Intercultural Focus Affects the Curriculum," by Nancy Sandberg and Rita Krasnow; (7) "Putting Vision into Reality: A Model for Employee Participation and Empowerment," by Tom Wilkinson, Peggy Atkins, Bridget Franklin, and Carol Smith; (8) "Support Staff Development: A Critical Link in Student Retention," by Sharon Fisher, Tamyra Kennedy, Barbara Fuller, Linda Moore, Michael Rush, and Debbie Seymore; (9) "Focus on Computer Communications: Toward Better Communication," by Richard J. Medell; and (10) "Harrington's Corner: Some of My Best Friends Are Called 'Adjunct,'" by Dick Harrington. Six poems are also provided in this issue. (JMC)

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VCCA Journal

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Journal of the Virginia Community Colleges Association

Volume 5, Number 1 Summer 1990

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Scholarship: The Community College's Achilles' Heel

By George B. Vaughan

Director of the Center for Community College Education at George Mason University

While it is expected—indeed, demanded—that faculty in four-year colleges and universities spend a considerable portion of their time engaged in scholarly activities, too often at community colleges such activities are actually discouraged. The result is unfortunate. Faculty at senior institutions treat their colleagues at community colleges with scant respect, and the public, often without knowing why, views community colleges as extensions of high school, not as colleges. Scholarship is the Achilles' heel of the American community college.

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Cover: Richmond's Bell Tower and Capitol Square in the 1850's.

VCCA Journal

From the Editors 4

Outcomes Assessment Weather Forecast: A Cold Wind Blowing from the North
The new U.S. Department of Education consumer disclosure requirements for colleges have become an assessment issue.
by David C. Hanson 6

The National Endowment for the Humanities Grant at Piedmont Virginia Community College
A planning grant to focus the college's mission in the humanities and a three-year grant for team-teaching and faculty development are described.
by Evelyn Edson, Jane Kingston, William Owen, and Samuel Westbrook 10

Spring Break in Toronto: Exposing Students to a Global Society
This program for selected students who had never been out of the U.S. provided an opportunity to travel to and learn about a similar yet distinct culture.
by Quintin S. Doromol, Jr., and Cindy N. Miller 14

Toward Shared Values in the Community College Humanities Curriculum
Recent controversies over the state of the humanities, the role of the humanities, and the content of the humanities curriculum are discussed, and aspects of successful courses are presented.
by Samuel B. Olorounto 18

Perspectives on Part-Time Teaching in Community Colleges: Pressures, Politics, and Prospects
After a review of literature on the causes and effects of the increasing number of courses taught by adjunct faculty in the U. S., the author presents the results of a survey of adjunct faculty perceptions at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College and elsewhere.
by Larry Roderer and Betty Weissbecker 28

Continued

How the Need to Give an International/Intercultural Focus Affects the Curriculum

The authors advocate a deliberate, carefully planned process of including an international perspective in the curriculum and review course modules that present this perspective.

by Nancy Sandberg and Rita Krasnow 34

Putting Vision into Reality: A Model for Employee Participation and Empowerment

A highly effective program to increase the level, quality, and responsiveness of services offered by the Learning Resource Center at New River Community College is described.

by Tom Wilkinson, Peggy Atkins, Bridget Franklin, and Carol Smith 38

Support Staff Development: A Critical Link in Student Retention

Three community colleges in Virginia have joined together to enrich one of the most important service links to students–the support staff–utilizing workshop materials designed specifically for college support staff.

by Sharon Fisher, Tamyra Kennedy, Barbara Fuller Linda Moore, Michael Rush, and Debbie Seymore 43

Poetry

As You Can See	S. E. Simpson	5
While You Were Gone	Robert Lesman	33
The Poetry Reading	Robert Lesman	37
Bigdaddy's Train Wreck, 1939	S. E. Simpson	48
hardball (for Jeff Hockaday)	Dick Harrington	55
The Sixties	Robert Lesman	56
Call for Poetry		53

Focus on Computer Communications

Toward Better Communication, by Richard J. Medell

An introduction to PROFS and BITNET.

50

Harrington's Corner

by Dick Harrington

54

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From the Editors

This time we would like to ask our readers to consider the following problem. Your college, MVCC, has a popular Office Systems Technology program with an excellent reputation in the community. When a secretary from an area company needs a course in business law or shorthand, she knows where to come. Yet, at the start of the spring semester of 1990, new students in the program were signing the following form.

HOW OUR STUDENTS ARE DOING

To help you make a good decision about whether to sign up for Office Systems Technology, Middle Virginia Community College wants you to know that, according to the latest information –

7.41 %, or **4** of the **54** students in this program scheduled to graduate in 1988 went on to graduate; and

*** 5.56 %**, or **3** of the **54** students scheduled to graduate in that year have found jobs in office support or services.

I have read and understood the graduation rate and job placement rate information provided above.

____ (Prospective student's signature)

Date

*We have been told by **0** of the students that were scheduled to graduate in that year that, even though they graduated, they decided not to look for a job in that occupation. Also, **0** of the students scheduled to graduate in that year have not responded to our job placement questionnaire, so we do not know whether they have found jobs or not.

What happened?
To find out more, see David Hanson's article on page 6.

As You Can See

Oh yeah – that stump removal from the lawn –
I'll have to say the job was pretty tough,
But it made me think. With every grunt and puff
My insight grew as to how the West was won –
The years' relentless hacking with the axe,
The flames – plain and village going up
In smoke like the stump, charred to a hardened cup;
I saw the blistered palms, the muscles taxed,
The watery eyes as the pioneer by steel
And fire chipped at the American frontier,
Intractable – magnificent, with sheer
Tenacity. For this I got the feel.
The result, as you can see, was worth the price –
This delightful spot for serving drinks on ice.

S. E. Simpson
Rappahannock Community College
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Outcomes Assessment Weather Forecast: A Cold Wind Blowing From the North

by David C. Hanson

[At the 1989 annual VCCA convention held in Roanoke, I predicted that the college outcomes assessment movement is likely to become even more pervasive in the 1990s. I warned that federal "track record disclosure" requirements may foreshadow a chilling new era of increasing accountability for higher education. The following is an elaboration of that warning. D.H.]

As in other states, Virginia's institutions of higher education have been responding to recent mandated guidelines for systematic and comprehensive assessment of student outcomes. Attention has focused on two external sources of institutional action on outcomes assessment: a 1985 General Assembly resolution (and subsequent State Council of Higher Education guidelines) and "institutional effectiveness" criteria added to postsecondary accreditation standards by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Though fairly specific about what colleges must do to be in compliance, both State Council of Higher Education and SACS requirements recognize the importance of institutional diversity and autonomy in higher education. They also emphasize that assessment should be, above all, a self-directed process of evaluating and improving institutional performance. The assessment movement in Virginia has avoided the kind of lock-step tracking, testing, and numbers games that have plagued colleges in other states. Instead of a burdensome intrusion on faculty, a barrier to students, or a meaningless exercise in bureaucratic busywork, assessment in Virginia appears to have been creative, stimulating, and rewarding.

Within the last year, however, a new player, the U.S. Department of Education, has quietly entered the assessment arena with an unsettling game plan. National interest in upgrading the quality of higher education is nothing new, but until recently the federal role had been essentially limited to stirring up attention through various well-publicized studies such as *A Nation At Risk*, and to stimulating voluntary reforms through

FIPSE grants. Then, in July 1988 the Secretary of Education announced in the Federal Register a new requirement that regional accrediting agencies must include a focus on outcomes assessment. This was followed a year later by "track record disclosure" regulations for postsecondary institutions offering undergraduate nonbaccalaureate programs. These regulations (34 CFR 668.44), however well-intentioned, could lead to disastrous consequences for community colleges. Proposed as part of the Secretary's assault on the problem of student loan defaults, the "consumer information" regulations took effect in December of 1989. Briefly summarized, the regulations require institutions to report to prospective students (and to the Department of Education) specific graduation rates, employment rates, and licensure examination pass rates for nonbaccalaureate vocational programs. The purpose of this "track record disclosure" information is to allow prospective students to make informed consumer choices about academic programs and thereby help reduce the default rate on federally guaranteed student loans.

Aside from the fundamental question of whether students' opportunities for academic success–and their likelihood of subsequent employment and loan repayment–are significantly enhanced by such disclosure, there are numerous technical problems with the data requirements specified in the regulations. In essence, institutions are required to calculate program completion rates as the percentage of students who enter a program and graduate on schedule and/or obtain employment in their career field. Projected completion dates are based on the length of the program and each student's credit load (pro-rated for part-time students). To obtain this information, institutions would need a sophisticated tracking system that follows each student from entry to exit and on into the work force. Obtaining the information is but one of many sources of concern. Another problem is figuring out how to provide and explain such potentially misleading data to prospective students. Colleges are required to use a standard form entitled "How Our Students Are Doing" for each academic program. Prospective students are supposed to read and sign the form, thereby certifying that they were not recruited under false pretenses.

Perhaps the most frightening aspect of the track record disclosure regulations is the Secretary's stated intent to disseminate this information, compiled and arranged by geographic area and vocation, to high schools and various other entities. Recipients of these lists would be able to see for themselves "how students are doing" in postsecondary vocational/technical education. What is so frightening about public disclosure of comparative information on student success rates? What are colleges afraid of? Won't informed consumer choice simply help to promote healthy competition, stimulate program improvements, and eliminate unproductive or unscrupulous operations? And won't a realistic picture of program performance help protect students' and taxpayers' investment in federal student loan programs?

First, colleges should not fear fair and accurate disclosure of student success rates; but colleges are wise to be concerned about the dissemination of gross and misleading data. Normal community college student enrollment patterns do not fit neatly into the type of tracking system prescribed by the federal regulations. Students commonly change from one program to another; they change their credit load and timetable for program completion because of job changes, family obligations, health and personal developments, and countless other unpredictable nonacademic reasons.

Second, a high rate of student success is not necessarily a measure of program quality. If colleges feel pressured to retain and graduate students at the expense of academic standards, or to prepare students for high employment in low-paying entry level jobs, the disclosure of comparative rates would be counter-productive. Conversely, more selective admission standards would help raise student success rates but at the cost of access, thus restricting access to vocational/technical education and denying equal opportunity to those most in need of improved employment skills.

Colleges are trying to comply as best they can in response to the seemingly impossible demands posed by these regulations. A poll of Virginia's 23 community colleges revealed that none were able to provide all the data required, even after extensive work. Most reported that they felt compelled to use the "How Our Students Are Doing" forms even though they did not have the correct data or any confidence in the forms. One college official explained, "most students were impatient with the explanation and just wanted to know where to sign." Another college representative commented, "It was a nightmare to try to put [the prescribed data] together, and even after all the effort, the data was useless." The following expression of frustration reveals that poor communication by federal officials contributed to the problems:

> At first we thought the requirements applied only to schools with a high default rate, and ours was less than five percent. Then we learned it applied to all schools, but we assumed it was just for students in Title IV programs. By the time we understood all that was required, we barely had time to meet the deadline and we couldn't provide much of the required data.

Indeed, it is astonishing that something of such magnitude was mandated with so little communication. All direction from the Department of Education regarding the sweeping consumer disclosure requirements of the default reduction regulations has been through the *Federal Register* and some last-minute "dear colleague" letters sent to college financial aid officers. This has caused the requirements to be widely regarded as a financial aid matter rather than an assessment issue. Consequently, the technical problems obvious to experienced college assessment personnel have not been resolved.

Worse than poor communication is the apparent lack of any consideration or understanding of how community colleges operate. The regulations are

believed to have been directed primarily at proprietary schools which attract students with promises of guaranteed job placement. Public colleges rarely recruit students with specific claims of student success (other than occasional alumni testimonials in brochures). Such tactics are considered unseemly. Studies consistently indicate that students typically enroll in community colleges because of location, open admission, flexibility and low tuition. Those community college programs such as nursing and other allied health fields which do attract mostly traditional, full-time students because of their reputation for high licensure exam pass rates and employment success are atypical. Since most other occupational/technical programs at community colleges largely consist of part-time students who are already employed, the assumptions underlying the consumer disclosure requirements are simply not valid.

The worst-case scenario frequently discussed at assessment conferences is the specter of externally developed and rigidly structured reporting requirements, imposed on colleges by public officials who do not understand the complexities of colleges, who are not sensitive to differences among institutions and academic programs, and who reduce accountability to simple numbers which distort the true nature and purpose of higher education. To the extent that this characterization fits the federal track record disclosure regulations, it is a problem which deserves broader and more serious attention.

David C. Hanson is Director of Instructional Support Services at Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke and a consultant on student outcomes assessment.

The National Endowment for the Humanities Grant at Piedmont Virginia Community College

by Evelyn Edson, Jane Kingston, William Owen, and Samuel Westbrook

The story of Piedmont Virginia Community College's NEH grant begins with a fishing expedition to Washington by the college's then-president, George Vaughan, and then-dean, Robert Templin. Making the rounds of federal funding agencies, they finally arrived at the friendly offices of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which encouraged them to apply for a small planning grant to focus the college's mission in the humanities. Written largely by Dr. Templin, the planning grant was funded for the year 1986-87, and a task force was set up with the job of reviewing the college's course offerings, library, curricula, extra-curricular program, faculty, and faculty development opportunities.

The Work of the Task Force

The task force represents not only the humanities division but Piedmont Virginia Community College as a whole. Five members come from disciplines in the humanities, while one is from science and another is from the business division. The director of student activities also serves as an ex officio member.

During the year of the planning grant, 1986-87, the task force concentrated on defining the desirable role of the humanities in the college curriculum. The group had lengthy, lively, and exciting discussions about whether to require a core course in humanities for all students and what the content of such a course should be. The members did not all share the same starting position, but after many sessions together, followed by college-wide meetings, the group developed a coherent task-force position. The college then introduced, in the fall of 1987, a year-long humanities course, integrating the disciplines of music, art, philosophy, and literature, presented in a historical framework. The course was jointly taught by three members of the task force and thus directly reflected the spirit of our discussions. Although the course is not now required of all students, it has been very successful over the last three years. In effect, we have an innovative pilot program that we can

evaluate and consider for wider adoption.

During the planning year, the task force also completed other activities, including evaluation of all of our curricula, humanities course offerings, library holdings in the humanities, student activities and cultural events, and faculty development. From our analyses we were able to propose many changes, some of which were funded by the National Endowment in a three-year grant extending from 1988 through 1991. Funded activities included continued team-teaching of the interdisciplinary course, summer seminars for faculty, and a series of Friday afternoon workshops for faculty in music (1988-89) and film (1989-90).

The work of the task force continues through 1991. We will once again raise the issue of a required humanities course with the entire faculty. We will evaluate the current humanities course, and in conjunction with reviews of other colleges' programs and our faculty's opinion, we will make a final recommendation to the entire college. Raising the core course issue is important even if the result is that we decide not to require such a course. This discussion will keep alive the dialogue about the importance of the humanities at PVCC, a dialogue that is vital in our ongoing efforts to define the college's educational mission.

The Interdisciplinary Humanities Course

The interdisciplinary humanities course is a very ambitious one, ranging from *The Odyssey* to *Death in Venice*, and attempting to build an understanding of Western culture from the varying perspectives of art, history, music, philosophy, and literature. During the first year of the course, three instructors—one each from history, music and drama, and English—taught as a team. There were three sections of the course, and all three of us met with each section. Although one instructor was responsible for presenting the material during a particular class period, all joined in the discussion and brought different perspectives by offering additional comments and by challenging each other in the spirit of scholarly debate and intellectual inquiry. Through this model of academic exploration, we hoped to encourage the students to see that thoughtful disagreement and debate lead to discovery and deeper understanding of subjects and ideas. We also wanted to have the students realize that each discipline approaches subjects with its peculiar set of concerns and methods of inquiry and in so doing extends rather than negates knowledge. In addition, we wanted the students to see that in the midst of polite disagreements and challenge people can still be respectful of others with different views. We did have to be constantly on guard, however, that we did not become so passionately involved with our discussions that the students felt intimidated and were reticent rather than participating actively and claiming the class as their own.

The team approach extended beyond the classroom. We had been meeting regularly over the preceding summer to design the course. These meetings continued. We also read and evaluated the students' papers in a

round-table format, taking turns recording composite comments at the end of each paper. In their evaluations of the course, students stated that they enjoyed the exchange among the instructors, found the variety of teaching styles refreshing, and felt confident in the method of grading.

Although exhilarating for the instructors and exciting for the students, such an approach proved exhausting for instructors who taught a variety of courses in addition to the survey of western culture. Therefore, during the following year, each of us took responsibility for one section of the course and rotated among the sections to lecture and guide discussions in our area of expertise. By that time, a philosophy instructor had joined the team and a fourth section was added to the schedule. Each instructor, then, met with his or her assigned section each time it met, was present when another member of the team was a guest lecturer, oversaw the administrative details for the class, and evaluated the papers and examinations written by the students in that class. The NEH grant provided us with released time to carry out this work.

Although we no longer meet for each class and no longer have team grading sessions, we continue to meet frequently as we did during the first year of the course to discuss our work, students' concerns, course content and design, and teaching joys and frustrations.

Faculty Development Programs

Faculty in all disciplines were given special development opportunities in the humanities under the NEH grant. Why would a nearly constant group of ten to fifteen faculty and staff members stay late once each month on Friday afternoons to watch a video series about music and our culture? Or why would another group of eighteen full- and part-time faculty from areas as diverse as geology and respiratory therapy study the writings of a medieval poet for three weeks during the summer break? Was it a desire to stretch beyond the usual classes and disciplines?

Coupled with the remarkable opportunities of our grant and creative ideas from its coordinator, faculty at PVCC were able to take advantage of these two special programs. This has resulted in strengthened collegial relationships and a greater sense of community, both difficult to cultivate in the day-to-day rush of usual activities.

The first program required few funds. In fact, the showing of the video series, *Music of Man*, needed only refreshments, our music professor to answer questions, and the participants' enthusiasm to be successful. The sharing of ideas about the history and heritage of music in human life stirred reactions and emotions. Doing this with faculty/staff colleagues was unusual and rewarding. The thinking of the secretary and the history professor were equal here. Our shared experience in the program's music and commentary broke down formal barriers to allow genuine communication through the language of music.

Not inexpensive or possible without special resources, the summer seminar devoted to a study of Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*

provided an extraordinary forum. The assembled faculty group explored literary, artistic, philosophical, theological, and political ideas – in short, the Western cultural experience, viewed through the eyes of medieval man. Led by a professor of Italian literature from the University of Virginia, the Dante seminar provided an intimate setting to discuss the *Comedy*. Membership included professors of nursing, computer science, Spanish, English, part-time instructors, a visiting scholar from a teacher's college in Budapest – the diversity defied explanation. Yet something special happened in those three weeks of daily study and discussion – it would never happen in offices on campus. It could never happen in our normal life of teaching. Drawn apart and away to study the text of Dante, the seminar participants learned, disagreed, laughed, shared, and "intervened." Though fatigued at the end, the participants found that their intensity of study and discussion was rewarded with a sense of having taken part in something unique.

With the end of these activities came the return to daily teaching and academic duties. An enrichment of self and a new sense of respect for colleagues came along, too. The reflection of these activities at Piedmont may be intangible to some observers. The spirit of what they brought back to PVCC is here though – a stronger community of instructors, a stronger community of learners.

Conclusion

The opportunities provided by the grant continue. During the 1989-1990 academic year our Friday afternoon programs continued with a series of classic films. Most recently, Letty Macdonald, a math teacher, presented *Grand Illusion*. This summer the three-week seminar will be on Plato's *Republic*. Right now the faculty applications are coming in. Soon another discussion of core curriculum will involve the whole faculty. This time we will have concrete data to present on the success of the humanities course. All these activities have placed humanities front and center at PVCC. If you think your college would be interested in such a program, write to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Education Programs, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D. C. 20506. Phone: (202) 786-0438. We at Piedmont would also be happy to assist our fellow VCCA members in any way we can.

Evelyn Edson is Professor of History at Piedmont Virginia Community College and Project Director of the NEH grant.

Jane Kingston is Assistant Professor of Accounting at PVCC.

William D. Owen is Professor of English at PVCC.

Samuel A. Westbrook is Assistant Professor of Respiratory Therapy at PVCC.

Spring Break in Toronto: Exposing Students to a Global Society

by Quintin S. Doromal, Jr., and Cindy N. Miller

[This project received a 1989 Excellence in Education Award from the College of Education at Virginia Tech.]

Student development classes are offered at Southwest Virginia Community College to assist students in their adjustment to life in a post-secondary educational setting. Also known as STD 100 Orientation, the one-credit, thirteen week course is considered a graduation requirement for a degree or certificate program of study. The course provides students with information on the various services available on campus, offers mentoring opportunities with faculty advisors, study skills workshops, and video cassettes on a variety of personality development courses. Activities are also offered to clarify vocational goals and reinforce the responsibility for learning. Aside from class attendance, participation in workshops, seminars, or presentations is also required.

For many area residents living in Buchanan, Dickenson (partial), Russell and Tazewell counties, the college is perhaps their last experience with formal education. This rural mountainous terrain presents a geographical barrier for opportunities to higher education and cultural diversity. An absence of intentional programming to educate these students to diverse cultures and issues of a global nature suggests that they may complete program requirements for graduation without a fundamental understanding of their role in an interdependent world.

A program involving out-of-country travel was developed last year as a culminating activity of this college transition course. Seen as an opportunity to provide experiential learning and overcome geographical barriers to cultural diversity, "Spring Break in Toronto" was an attempt to provide selected students an opportunity to visit a foreign country, interact with a similar yet distinctly different culture, and develop an appreciation for a pluralistic society.

Selection

Participants for the activity were selected based on the following criteria. First, students had to be enrolled for a minimum of twelve credit hours or have full-time student status.

Second, they had to submit an essay on the subject of "Why I Would Like To Visit Canada." Third, they had to complete a student development course. Aside from STD 100 Orientation, students who have completed STD 105 Personal Development From a Women's Perspective were eligible. This course addresses the psychological and educational adjustment needs of the female student. Topics covered include personal development, career education and study skills. Fourth, they had to have U.S. Citizenship. Fifth, they could not have any previous foreign travel. This was necessary to have all the participants experience first time out-of-country travel. Sixth, they had to have a letter of reference from a faculty member. Seventh, applicants had to reside in the four-county service area. And lastly, each of the interested students had to have a personal interview.

Applications were received from students residing in Tazewell, Russell, and Buchanan counties. After the interviews were completed, the final selection of the students included two students from Tazewell, six from Russell, and two from Buchanan counties.

Training Sessions

There were three sessions to prepare the participants for the study tour. During the first session, the students were requested to write a one-paragraph biography of themselves. This was sent to Humber College as part of an itinerary package. Each biography included the student's college major, past experience, future goals, and trip expectations. Each received a training manual that was designed specifically for the trip.

The following topics were covered during the first day: entry into Canada, customs, currency and banking, public transportation, driving, and metric conversion. Samples of paper and coin currency were passed around to the students. A travel video cassette on the province of Ontario was available through prior loan arrangements with the Canadian Embassy.

The second session involved a discussion of the postal service, sales tax, tipping, and climate, and of the history, geography and economy of Ontario and Niagara Falls. A video cassette on Niagara Falls was also viewed.

During the third session participants discussed the journal writing section of the manual and completed release forms. Students who did not have health insurance coverage completed a travel accident policy provided through the Bluefield Automobile Club. A final departure time and place was designated. Due to limited luggage space, suggestions on what to pack were offered. A video cassette on Toronto was also viewed.

The Trip

Sensitive to the current economic conditions of the service area, planners held costs for three-night's of lodging at $75. Transportation was provided by a college vehicle at no cost to the participants. Also, to familiarize the students with other sister institutions and develop a broader definition of "community," the program received support and cooperation from Niagara County Community College (NCCC)

in Sanborn, New York, and Humber College of Applied Arts and Technology (HC) in Etobicoke, Ontario.

During the first day as guests of NCCC, student government representatives provided a campus tour for the group, a cafeteria dinner, and lodging at $5 per participant in their leased apartment housing. Through collaboration with the International Projects officer at HC, the participants received similar hospitality the following day with a buffet lunch, a lecture on the Huron Indian language and an introduction to the multicultural diversity of Toronto. Room accommodations at a downtown hotel were reserved by the college at reduced rates.

The next day there were tours of a community center that offered English language classes to Chinese immigrants, a herbalist shop, a Chinese newspaper, and a fast food emporium that sold a variety of ethnic delicacies. The afternoon was spent visiting a social services office for recent Greek immigrants, a Greek Orthodox church, and a pastry shop. The rest of the evening was spent visiting notable landmarks of the city such as the CN Tower – the largest free-standing structure in the world – and Eaton Centre, a department store that has access to metropolitan Toronto's underground city, the world's largest subterranean complex. The last day was spent traveling back to Southwest Virginia

Student Evaluation

Participants were required to complete an evaluation form that requested comments on the value of the trip, on the "similarities and differences between the people you met and those that represent where you live," and on improvements for next year's trip. Some of the responses on the value of the trip included such statements as:

> Yes, the trip was a worthwhile experience. It was great to be able to travel to a foreign country. Meeting people of different cultures and backgrounds was very interesting and educational. . . . I had never eaten Chinese food or anything like it. I thought it was a great experience getting a chance to try all those different foods. We learned that their delicacies were very different from ours.

Responses to the question concerning similarities and differences included the following:

> After my visit to Canada, I have come to the conclusion that the people here are not actually that different. The main differences are the obvious ones: their accents, their fashion statements (purple hair), and unlike southwest Virginia they don't seem to speak just out of friendliness.

The general consensus concerning suggestions for next year's trip indicated the following: first, that the trip be extended as travel took two full days; second, that a luggage rack be standard equipment for the college van; third, that funding to support the trip be arranged through a fund raiser; and lastly, that the absence of prior

out-of-country exposure as a requirement be limited only to the country visited.

Implications for Practice

Programming international education activities at a rural community college requires a sensitivity to the local economic conditions, internal support from administrators, and cooperation from other sister institutions. Through these efforts, participant costs were kept to a minimum. Institutional commitment included the use of a college vehicle for transportation, fuel expenses, and released time for counselors to develop, plan and execute the activity. Cooperation from two other colleges was beneficial and welcomed in the planning process. An evaluation was completed to determine whether the activity did in fact accomplish its stated purpose. Responses of the participants indicated that the activity was a "peak experience," one that was very meaningful.

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Cindy N. Miller will complete the Associate in Applied Science Degree majoring in Computer Information Systems. She also was a participant in the activity.

Toward Shared Values in the Community College Humanities Curriculum

by Samuel B. Olorounto

The renewed interest in the humanities continues to grow rapidly in the United States, for there has been a rediscovery of the contributions that humanistic values can make in a pluralistic society. Many Americans believe in and search for those values in education, economics, business, and politics. This new enthusiasm also aims at combating cultural illiteracy.

While the contributions humanistic studies can make to the individual and to the society are generally acknowledged and desired, how the college curriculum will increase those contributions is still a much debated issue. Areas of serious debate include the contents of the humanities curriculum, methods of teaching, approaches to critical analysis, and ways of maintaining "shared values." Most teachers of the humanities will agree that academic curricula in the humanities should lead the student to develop certain competencies. The curriculum should strive to preserve the independent quest for truth through textual analysis (devoid of ideological tendencies), leading the student to the cultivation of the intellect, the acquisition of critical skills, an in-depth knowledge of humanity, and an ability to make reasoned choices. The agreement that attainment of this intellectual growth is important is what the expression *shared values* means in this paper.

New Enthusiasm for the Humanities

Philosophical and ideological controversies concerning the humanities curriculum have been common in this country, particularly during the last three decades. Recently, those controversies have been reinforced by new scholarly and theoretical developments, and special commissions have studied and reported how the humanities have been disseminated in both social and academic institutions.

The tones of recent reports on the state of the humanities, however, have been somewhat acrimonious, indicating factionalism among the humanists themselves. Two recently published reports identify such factionalism.

On the one hand is the argument that the humanities curriculum in American colleges and universities

should focus primarily on Western culture.

On the other hand is the position that the changing global situations call for a curriculum that emphasizes both Western and other cultures; materials from other cultures should be integrated into the humanities curriculum, not as tokenism but as a viable source of knowledge, having equal recognition as traditional texts. Those who advocate this second position also call for a new way to interpret traditional texts.

In September 1988, the National Endowment for the Humanities published *Humanities in America: A Report to the President, the Congress, and the American People*. The report praised the general public for increased programming in the humanities and criticized academic institutions for doing less, and it explained the agency's position on the humanities. Lynne V. Cheney, Chairman of the agency and the author of the report, argues:

> It is not possible to make such a positive assessment when one looks at our colleges and universities. At the same time that public interest in the humanities has grown, study of these disciplines has declined among formally enrolled students. Between 1966 and 1986, a period in which the number of bachelor's degrees awarded increased by 88 percent, the number of bachelor's degrees awarded in the humanities declined 33 percent. Foreign language majors dropped by 29 percent; English majors, by 33 percent; philosophy majors, by 35 percent; and history majors, by 43 percent. (4)

The report further states that in "the academy, the humanities have become arcane" (7); that "As specialization becomes ever narrower, the humanities tend to lose their significance and centrality" (8); that "achievements in the classroom have counted less than scholarly monographs and articles in professional journals" (10); and that "Viewing humanities texts as though they were primarily political documents is the most noticeable trend in academic study of the humanities today" (11-12). And the solution recommended by Cheney was that "Colleges and universities should work toward intellectually coherent curricula" (32). Apart from being a report on the state of the humanities, *Humanities in America* is, to date, one of the harshest criticisms of the way American colleges and universities have disseminated the humanities.

In response to this criticism, a group of directors of humanities centers and professors of humanities at major American universities issued a statement published by the American Council of Learned Societies as *Speaking for the Humanities*. This report calls most of Lynne Cheney's criticism of the academy "off the mark" and optimistically postulates:

> We are living . . . through a revival of the humanities on campuses where until recently the focus of students was overwhelmingly on business and technological studies. (1)

The report further states:

> The proliferation of humanities centers on university campuses in recent years is one sign of a desire on the part of scholars to communicate with colleagues in other fields, to exchange results of thinking within particular disciplines, and to break down disciplinary boundaries in their research. (7)

In studying the canon of Western culture, "We should not equate truth with our own political ideology" (10); "the best work characteristic of the humanities today has renewed debates on value, indeed on the ethics of what we study and how we study it" (10); "popular culture, instead of being excoriated as the cause of the degeneration of youth might be made part of contemporary education" (17); and "one of the reasons there is so much activity on matters of teaching and curriculum within universities is that change is so very difficult to effect" (18).

Speaking for the Humanities affirms that all sources of knowledge, such as the materials studied in the humanities, incorporate peculiar biases, galvanized by self-interest and self-perpetuating ideologies, cloaked in the context of universals. The report advocates the study of the traditional texts in their historical, social, and ideological contexts.

When designing or revamping a curriculum, one should be familiar with the two views of the humanities expressed in *Humanities in America* and *Speaking for the Humanities*. Doing so has several advantages. First, familiarity with these position statements will assist the humanities teacher to formulate specific objectives for a program in the humanities. Second, these scholarly debates serve as a paradigm for the kind of intellectual exercise that characterizes the study of the humanities. If the question of curriculum could generate these complex arguments, the content of the curriculum itself will be expected to lead to varied view points on both method of interpretation and the difficulty of deriving meaning. Finally, the on-going curricular controversy among humanists validates the importance of the humanities to our colleges and universities. The new perspectives that emerge from this controversy enable the humanities faculty to explore new dimensions in formulating the curricula that are responsive to students' needs.

What impacts has this curricular controversy had on the humanities curriculum in the community college? Some of the reports issued by various commissions on the humanities devoted sections to the community college. For example, *The Humanities in American Life: Report of the Commission on the Humanities*, issued in April 1989, devoted one of its thirty-one recommendations to the community college. The authors of the report put it this way:

> We join the Center for the Study of Community Colleges, the Community College Humanities Association, and the assembly convened in November 1979 by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges in

recommending that community colleges (and, we would add, other institutions offering technical and vocational training) organize interested members of the local community into lay advisory committees to help integrate the humanities with career education. These groups should include representatives from the trade advisory councils and other agencies that establish requirements for vocational education. As role models, placement advisors, and recruiting agents, the members of these advisory committees can act as advocates for the humanities among occupational students and the community. (119)

This report made a significant contribution to the advancement of the humanities in the United States, for it emphasized, among other things, the indispensable role of the community in the planning, implementation, and administration of the humanities.

In the light of recent developments, specific reports have been issued to address the situation of the humanities in the community college curriculum. In October 1988, for example, four affiliate councils of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges published *Integrating the Humanities into Associate Degree Occupational Programs: A Final Report of the Shared Vision Task Force*. This report defined *shared vision* in relation to the mission of the community college:

> It is envisioned that the Humanities will be accepted as a viable and integral component of two-year occupational curricula when occupational students, faculty, and administrators are presented with the evidence that employers value the contributions of the Humanities to occupational preparation. Equally important, when Humanities faculties understand that the achievement of specific learning outcomes resulting from the study of the humanities does contribute to work-place performance, they will examine course content to assure that those specific outcomes are included. At the same time occupational faculties will examine their institutional programs to assure that these specific outcomes, beyond proficiency in communication and technical skills, are included in their curricula goals and the humanities integrated into those programs. This is the "Shared Vision." (2)

Shared vision, as defined above, called for cooperation between the faculties of the humanities and technologies in matters of curriculum planning and implementation. In the survey conducted for the report, employers expressed their opinions on the contributions they believed the study of the humanities could make to business enterprises. Based on those opinions, the writers recommended strong cooperation between faculties of the humanities and technologies.

The Goal Is To Educate

While there is no consensus among the humanists themselves on what

should be included or excluded from the humanities curriculum or a solid agreement between the faculties of the humanities and technologies concerning degree requirements, these educators do believe that the student should learn to know. Yet the task of imparting knowledge should not be carried out in isolation from the educator's familiarity with the needs of the student. One must be cognizant, for instance, of the fact that the community college represents the highest ideal in the attempt to democratize American higher education. As a result, the community college clientele, enrolling through open door policy, vary significantly in age and purpose for enrollment. There are those who work and attend school, single parents, people who need temporary job training to increase chances of getting jobs, transfer students, continuing students, and others.

Whatever the case may be, the humanities curriculum should make an attempt to meet the student's intellectual needs. This premise is similar to the position taken by a group of scholars who reviewed the condition of the humanities in the University of North Carolina system. The humanities curriculum should be organized, the reviewers concluded, in such a way as to effectuate "the development of the individual" (Foerster 207). The ultimate aim of the humanities is neither to defend any ideology, domestic or foreign, nor to achieve idealistic world citizenship. Rather, the goal and the intent of the humanities is to educate the individual to make enlightened choices in complex matters of personal development, heritage, tradition, information, belief, life style, and cultural values.

How can the student accomplish this goal? Jacob Neusner believes that democratic approaches to higher education inevitably call for broader sources of knowledge and that the one goal that is worth striving for, in that situation, is teaching the student to think. He explains:

> More generally, what we teach students, through any subject, is about thinking, about using their minds for specific tasks. The curriculum then consists of two components: first, the information we offer, which students learn, and, second, our example of how we compose that information into intelligible propositions and arguments about possibilities, which students may choose to imitate and improve. Whether we teach undergraduate or graduate students, the issue is the same. Students should be concerned with modes of analysis and means of interpretation, through which they learn the particulars of information. (44)

The issue, then, is not only the approach to be used in organizing a curriculum, but also the intention of the curriculum for the student. The curriculum should have the potential to lead the student to the cultivation of the intellect, the examination of various sources of knowledge, and the appreciation of humanity.

The Curriculum Should Cultivate the Intellect

The cultivation of the intellect is the foundation upon which other contributions of the humanities rest; therefore, the content of any humanities curriculum should be profoundly relevant in its deli ation of human condition. The se ch for intellectual growth in thought and self-expression, through such a curriculum, has always been the humanistic ideal and begins from "self-knowledge and self-realization" (Foerster 208).

> The end [of general education] would seem to be...the transformation of the young and unformed, not into adjusted members of an unsound society, nor into tools for service in ever multiplying vocations defined by the division of labor, but into mature human beings, men and women of understanding and integrity. (Foerster 211)

In a curriculum modeled to attain this objective, the student will be reminded that "books came into the world not dead but as *quick thought*, and should beget quick thought, spurring [the student] to fresh creation" (Foerster 209-210).

For personal enrichment to take place, the curriculum should have a specific objective, based on a clear mission statement. The parties involved in creating the curriculum should determine at the onset the emphasis of the program. Is cultural literacy alone the objective of the curriculum? Or is the curriculum designed to teach the student to develop his or her abilities to think and decide from reasoned conclusions? Indeed, any humanities curriculum should strive toward achieving both objectives. But only a well constructed, balanced curriculum will definitely achieve both.

Nevertheless, a strong possibility exists that a curriculum may become nothing but a means to achieving cultural literacy at the expense of personal refinement. In that case, the student learns and memorizes avidly historical documents, battles, dates, events, biographies, names of literary figures, places, slogans, with little understanding of and less insight into the significance of those facts. The AACJC *Humanities Policy Statement* puts this succinctly:

> Instruction in the humanities must engage students extensively in activities that take them beyond the mere acquisition of facts and the comprehension of principles and theories. (2)

The final report of the Shared Vision Task Force (*Integrating the Humanities Into Associate Degree Occupational Programs*) explains how important it is to formulate a purpose for occupational programs that include the humanities as an integral part of the degree requirement.

> contributions [of the humanities] are considered significant because they play a vital role in strengthening a student's performance in the work-place by better enabling a student to work with others, solve problems, make decisions, and

adapt to an ever changing environment. (7)

In the attempt to lead the student to intellectual development, the studies of world literature, history, philosophy, anthropology, to mention a few, are indispensable. Furthermore, classical literature, the *Bible*, the *Koran*, The *Kena-Upanishad*, epic poetry, national literatures, as well as contemporary culture contain both aesthetic and thematic complexities that require rigorous explications and methodical elucidations. The thematic approach to studying literature, for example, tends to motivate the student to express personal views on a topic. Also, this method enhances the effectiveness of group discussion, for members of a group are likely to compete with one another in expressing their opinions, especially if the group is subdivided, with each sub-group researching a small topic from a broad theme.

One of the most ubiquitous themes in literature is human relationships, in all their varied dimensionspersonal and interpersonal, national and international. This theme is elemental indeed. Yet introducing the study of literature from this common theme can open a vista in the way a student thinks about literature. Let us place Aeschylus' Oresteia trilogy within this vista. In this monumental work, we see myriad roles which most humans play in their life timeleader, patriot, father, mother, wife, mistress, daughter, son, brother, sister, friend, juror, neighbor, citizen, soldier, follower, etc. These roles and the relationships they form transcend time and geography and, when presented to students, can stimulate a great deal of intellectual curiosity.

The proper study of the "Great Books" offers no less challenge to the student's curiosity. Even for a literary work that is not as famous as these, the experience can be the same. Take Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, for example. In this short novel, a powerful political leader, in utter frustration, broods over the nature of his political powers which, if they were to be exercised fully, will result in the virtual destruction of his people. "Of what good is power when one cannot use it?" he asks. This contemporary Nigerian novel raises many questions about advantages and disadvantages of super power and the principle of checks and balances in a democracy. If the common denominator is human relationships, the humanist teacher can adopt a thematic approach to study the texts, and the student will develop a broader view of life.

Examination of Learning Sources

The criteria for selecting materials for the humanities curriculum should be based on the objectives to be achieved in each course. If a broad theme has been selected for a particular course, then all the materials to be used in that course should contribute to the understanding of that theme. Be it a book, a piece of art, a film, or a music score, the primary source should engage the attention of the student, leading to reflection and culminating into further inquiries. The curriculum should encourage reading, writing, and speaking; and it should teach how to analyze a text to draw

conclusions. The student's critical skills develop rapidly when established critical materials that accompany primary sources are presented as alternate view points rather than absolutes. Such critical sources should be used, not to intimidate or stifle personal expression, but to stimulate the student's creative interpretations and meanings.

The thematic approach to the study of literary texts, supported by guided instructions, allows sharpened perceptions. Students eagerly accept the difficult challenge of resolving complex moral and ethical problems raised by a text when their own views are recognized and appreciated. The recognition of individual contribution to a discussion of a thought-provoking topic further motivates the student to pay close attention to the subtleties of a text. To make the humanities curriculum responsive to the personal development of the student, the atmosphere in the classroom should encourage freedom of thought and tolerance of different opinions. While the exploration of the humanities may involve the defense of and belief in a proposition, it ought to lead to its ultimate aim of developing new consciousness in the individual, leaving him or her unfettered by conventional assumptions and prejudices.

Appreciation of Culture

The appreciation of culture should be an integral part of the curriculum, with a statement of strategy to attain it. There are several ways to accomplish this via the curriculum. First, the student can apply to contemporary texts and popular culture the skills developed in the critical analysis of texts.

Second, a curriculum should include the study and discussion of other cultures. This could be done through the reading of literature from other cultures, inviting persons who have an understanding of a particular culture to make presentations to a class, sponsoring study abroad programs, inviting international students to give presentations about their countries, and devoting discussion time to contemporary, substantive issues from around the world. In fact, the recommended curriculum (*50 Hours: A Core Curriculum for College Students*) from the National Endowment for the Humanities, reported in the October 11, 1989, issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, included the study of African, Asian, and Latin American civilizations.

Third, the curriculum should be responsive to ethnic cultures within the United States, providing the student with an opportunity to design a project that focuses on a particular ethnic custom. It could be the recording and documentation of the vanishing heritage of an ethnic group. For example, the construction of an anthology of a given dialect, music, literature, etc., can lead to a sense of responsibility and accomplishment on the part of the student. This exercise also holds potential for creating in the student a sense of purpose and the satisfaction associated with the ability to preserve a heritage. Finally, it is essential to integrate regional and local cultures into the academic curriculum. The awareness of regional differences in language, music, art, literature, etc., holds

a world of wealth for a growing generation that often takes it for granted. The appreciation of the differences in regional, ethnic, and generational cultures, through comparisons, may help the student define his own life.

The community college humanities curriculum should meet the cultural needs of the community and, by doing so, encourage the community's continued funding, appreciation, and participation. By bringing to the campus community leaders in business, local government, and education, the humanities program can utilize community resources.

Indeed, the humanities teachers and administrators should find ways to get the community involved in their program. One way to bring members of the community to campus is to include the performing arts in the humanities curriculum. Students could produce plays as a part of their academic work. The college could bring a theater troupe to campus. A lecture series could be organized and well advertised in the community. A discussion period could follow such a lecture to give the audience an opportunity to participate. To maintain this kind of relationship between a humanities program and the people in the community, humanities teachers may conduct surveys periodically to gauge the changing needs and expectations of the citizens and their attitudes toward the humanities in general and toward specific projects in particular. Findings from these surveys will enable the humanities faculty to modify the approaches used to ensure effectiveness and relevance of the program.

Conclusion

A humanities curriculum designed primarily for the intellectual development of the student truly affirms the utmost intent of the humanities. The efforts to increase or improve courses in the humanities in the community college might focus on designing a curriculum that employs both traditional and experimental approaches to pedagogy, ensuring compatibility with the mission of the college and the needs of the student.

The needs of both the student and the community should serve as a guide for the planners of a humanities curriculum for setting realistic goals. A community-based approached to teaching integrated humanities could produce the best results. Business, civic, and educational leaders should be encouraged to be involved in sharing with the student the contributions that the study of the humanities has made to their personal and professional lives.

When all the components of the humanities curriculum are implemented with creative vitality, the humanities will continue their mission of cultivating the mind.

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Perspectives on Part-Time Teaching in Community Colleges: Pressures, Politics, and Prospects

by Larry Roderer and Betty Weissbecker

The ratio between full-time and part-time teachers in Virginia Community Colleges has changed from 75/25 in 1974 to about 50/50 at the present time. Concerns about the growing number of classes taught by part-time instructors were expressed in a panel presentation by a team from J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (JSRCC) at the October 1989 convention of the Virginia Community Colleges Association (VCCA) in Roanoke.

Panelmembers–Betty Weissbecker (math), Roland Moore (Chair of Arts and Sciences), Tim Lightfield (Dean of the College), and Larry Roderer (English)–agreed that the use of adjuncts has increased significantly and that the percentage of part-time instructors will continue to increase. At JSRCC the percentage of part-time instructors swelled from 50% during the 1988-89 academic year to 52% in fall of 1989. After the convention a VCCA task force was formed to study the issue and possibly influence Virginia Community College System policy.

We would like to find ways to improve conditions for part-time faculty, but we would also like to consider whether an increase in the number of classes taught by part-time instructors is detrimental to the welfare of the college and those it serves.

Authorities Review the Faculty Role

In *The Two-Year College Instructor Today*, Arthur M. Cohen takes the caustic position that we should do well to ask ourselves what full-time teachers can do for the college that part-time instructors cannot? He assumes, he says, that teaching full time will give us more experience; we'll read more professional journals; we'll probably pay more attention to curriculum and instructional problems; we'll probably do more research; but, really, he asks, what do we do? Do we know better how to resolve problems with instruction? Do we develop more valid criterion-referenced devices for assuring better learning? Do we present more clear and consistent reports on our accomplishments? What do we do?

Cohen says part-time instructors can teach more classes, give more lectures, hear more recitals, and turn in

more grades on time than our better-paid, full-time professionals (104).

"It's impossible," he says, "to tell whether students learned more from full-time rather than part-time teachers" (104). Further, he states that it is a clear advantage to the college budget to hire part-time teachers since the college board doesn't have to obligate itself to provide continuing employment to full-time professors. In 1974 Richard Meeth recommended a ratio of full to part-time faculty of 80/20 (167); now we face the prospect of having half our classes taught by adjuncts.

In working with the problems of reduced resources, James L. Wattenbarger, the force behind so much of the Florida community colleges' progress, says that we must balance the higher percentage of part-time teachers with more careful planning and quality control (62). He cites Springer and Schultz (1974) for their study of the order of frequency with which colleges meet budget crunches: by not filling allotted vacancies; by hiring more non-tenured and part-time professors; by utilizing more teaching assistants to do the professors' jobs; by having some teachers accept early retirement; and by reassigning teachers to make them more productive. These, Wattenbarger says, are reactionary methods which might be counterproductive. What we need to do, he claims, is take more reasonable and deliberate action to benefit the colleges: we need to do more with less, which might mean going even beyond the 50/50 ratio in the classroom of full to part-time faculty (63).

Accepting this premise, with a view toward creating a theory and model for integrating part-time faculty into a community college division, Michael Scott Cain, Associate Professor of English at Catonsville Community College in Maryland, says the crisis is reaching major proportions and is bound to affect the quality of instruction (42).

The 1987 Carnegie Commission on the Advancement of College Teaching sees with alarm what conditions part-time instructors operate under: they have no offices, little time for contact with students, short-term contracts, demanding personal schedules; and they find it very difficult to develop commitments and connections with other faculty. Therefore the spirit of community is tenuous at best and generally weakened (42).

However, as Cain sees it, the use of more part-time teachers will not stop. The reasons for using them to help regulate the budget are too strong, and they will continue to increase their role in the two-year colleges as our easiest way out of difficult financial situations. He urges that we no longer treat adjuncts as "stepchildren" of the college, and that we focus on improving their roles. "To solve the problem is to become aware of it," he says (43). Cain suggests that we need more materials about the college in the library for its part-time teachers; we need videotapes of classes as they're taught by full-time professors; we need models of courses by providing adjuncts with "meatier" syllabi; and we even need cocktail parties so they mingle with those who teach full time.

One of the first to say that using more part-time faculty would be detrimental to the

health of our colleges was Carol Eliason, the Project Director for the Center for Women's Opportunities, who also served as a consultant to AACJC. She warned us in 1980 that more women than men were teaching part time since women were expected to work for "coolie" wages (5). Eliason noted that when retrenchment occurs, the female suffers most: she's "last in and first out" (7). Furthermore, women seldom go through the grievance process when they are dismissed, thus leaving us very little documentation of their cases. The colleges make very little commitment to their part-time faculty, she adds (7).

Rae Price an instructor of language and literature at Penn Valley Community College in Kansas City, Missouri, wrote in 1981 that the job market was filled with women who wanted the prestige of community college teaching, who wanted to have a "proper" teaching job on the post-secondary level, but who gave up too much for it. They amounted to only 29.2 per cent of the tenured faculty on the two-year college level, and they were "under paid by all" (13). They make a good fit with the heavily female student population on the community college level, she said; and they serve as excellent, much-needed role models for their classes; but they suffer too much inequity and inequality (15).

In 1988, the Director of the MLA English Programs, Dr. David Laurence, spoke at the College English Association conference in Florida on some of the recent national trends in hiring adjunct teachers. He reported that between the fall of 1972 and fall of 1983 those who were employed part-time in the nation's two-year colleges increased by 189 per cent, from 44,000 to 127,000 (1). They are often hired at the last minute to fill a spot; they never receive tenure; and they move on as if they are itinerant laborers when enrollment declines, he said. Those of us who teach full time are all dispensable to the extent that we cannot defend against the allegation that "anyone can teach writing and English" (7). Laurence says that we need to reaffirm the link between teaching and scholarship and prove that we can do the job better than anyone else (7).

The Adjunct Faculty View

Acknowledging that about half of our classes are taught by adjunct faculty, what can the institution do to improve the role of the adjunct faculty in the college community? In the Fall of 1988, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College held several meetings with part-time faculty asking them about their perceptions of their situation. What is lacking and what could be improved? In addition, a number of interviews with adjunct faculty from other community and four-year colleges were conducted. The responses indicated three major areas of concern: communication, working conditions, and professional development.

The first and most often mentioned problem is that of communication. Comments such as, "I live in a vacuum, I teach and go home" or "I feel like an outsider" are heard. One full-time faculty member commented that for twelve years she taught as an adjunct while employed actively, full-time in her profession. No one ever

asked for her input on course content, sequencing of courses, textbooks, and so forth. Now as a full-time teacher she could affect change easily.

Adjunct faculty should be included as part of the department, and they should be invited to department meetings or asked to contribute ideas and opinions on topics on the agenda if they cannot attend. They should receive all department minutes and all division, campus, and college memos; and they should be informed of changes in course objectives, textbooks, curriculum requirements, and library holdings. They should be issued new college catalogs, college newsletters, and college calendars; and they should be invited to all social events. Many departments are already doing all or some of these things.

The second concern mentioned was working conditions. Adjunct faculty would like to be asked their class and time preferences. They may be planning on taking a class themselves or have other commitments to be considered. They would like to know before the end of the semester if they have been assigned a class for the next semester. They know that the class may be canceled or that they may lose a class to a full-time instructor, but they like to know that someone is thinking of them. One adjunct told me that she had contacted another institution because she had not been asked to teach at the institution for which she had been teaching. She was assigned two classes at the new institution. Two weeks later she received a phone call asking her to teach at the first institution. On one occasion, several adjunct teachers received a notice for adjunct faculty orientation, but did not attend because to their knowledge they had not been given a class.

Also mentioned was lack of office space, storage space (filing cabinets, etc.) and lack of access to supplies and equipment such as computers, copiers, laboratory equipment and telephones.

Several areas of professional development were mentioned. This is an indication that our adjunct faculty are interested, dedicated instructors willing to put in extra time to improve their skills and to keep up with current changes within the institution, in their content area, and in learning theory. Special professional development sessions for adjunct faculty could be offered, and consideration should be given to paying adjuncts for attendance at these meetings and others.

A part-time instructor could be paired with a full-time instructor in the department who could assist them, answer their questions, keep them informed, and supply sample syllabi, tests, handouts, and so on. The institution should seriously consider funding attendance at professional meetings and continued education for adjunct faculty.

Another area mentioned was evaluation. Adjunct faculty should be evaluated, probably are evaluated, but don't always know about or see their evaluations. They should know the criteria upon which they are evaluated, have input into their evaluations, and they should always see their student evaluations. They also should be given some recognition for good evaluations – ideally in the form of merit raises or

bonuses, but even an award or certificate of appreciation is better than being ignored. We need adjunct faculty and we should show that their services are appreciated. Since adjunct faculty teach forty to sixty per cent of the classes in the community colleges, if they are not considered and encouraged, we may see the effect on forty to sixty per cent of our students.

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While You Were Gone

to the conference at Princeton,
I took unilateral action
against periodical literature,
the pile beside our conjugal bed
become tall enough to fall and smash
red a naked toe. An old German rage
to order rose in me like a salute:

everything older than a month would go,
essential or un, nothing spared. Even
the Woman's Days went, a millennium of them
reminding you why you got the Ph.D.

Forgive me, but this is not, I hope, an offense
the likes of putting your ancient cocker spaniel
to sleep when his legs gave way and his cries
asked not why but when and said at last I'm through,
when you were gone once before. Forgive me, love,
and grant me my passions, as harmless as they are.

Robert Lesman
Northern Virginia Community College

How the Need to Give an International/Intercultural Focus Affects the Curriculum

by Nancy Sandberg and Rita Krasnow

Often, "general education" is defined to include the teaching of skills in communication, interpersonal relationships, computer use, critical thinking, and understanding one's environment and one's culture. Fortunately, Virginia's State Task Force on General Education has also recognized the need for a global perspective. We would like to see this international/intercultural component given more prominence and a sharper focus.

Traditionally, recommendations for international education involve the areas of faculty exchange, study abroad, foreign language courses and international student admissions. The problem is that the focus is on specific areas. What we are seeking is a more comprehensive international program – one that will infuse international topics into the content of most discipline courses in Virginia's community colleges. Here and there this process has begun – at Tidewater Community College, at Virginia Western, at Southwestern Virginia Community College, at Northern Virginia Community College – and it is up to us to give a global perspective, an international spin as it were, to even more of our classes.

The Virginia Community College System report *Toward the Year 2000* (Section II, items 4, 5) defined "international education" as education including national geography, history and government, and foreign language skills for "groups interested in the conversational skills necessary in an international community." Although language courses sometimes incorporate cultural training as well, this should not be left to chance. There should be a deliberate, carefully planned process by which the international perspective is inserted into the curriculum.

Before specific models or modules for courses are written, however, colleges should consider incorporating internationalization as a component of their stated missions. For example, Miami-Dade Community College has written an International Mission Statement that provides a college-wide basis for planning:

> A community college should be a door to global communication and awareness. Understanding global

interdependency in our increasingly complex societies is the key to economic, social, and cultural development. Global education can no longer be for a small elite; it must be an integral part of every student's education. Community colleges, because of their closeness to their communities, are uniquely suited to educate for global understanding.

Sample course modules are available from such colleges as Valencia Community College in Florida.

- Introductory Sociology Class – module on "Issues in Soviet Society" – to address differences between the Soviet and American world view and societal institutions. Another sociology course developed a module comparing the U.S. system of juvenile treatment/rehabilitation with systems of other countries.

- Composition I – modules to encourage students to write a critical essay on another culture. (This faculty member believes the development of critical thinking skills is central to the educational experience and this in turn reduces ethnocentrism and intolerance.)

- Introduction to Business – module on multinational corporations. Topics include the definition of a multi-national corporation; examination of selected U.S. multinational corporations; analysis of political, economic, cultural, legal and technological environments in which multinationals function and enumeration of effects on countries in which multinationals operate.

- Humanities – module to identify third world influences on the development of Western humanities including theater, dance, music, painting, sculpture and architecture.

In Virginia Dr. Mary Ruth Clowdsley at Tidewater Community College has also worked with faculty to develop a number of modules.

The 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* stated the following.

> Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science and technological innovation is being challenged by competition throughout the world.

A similar theme is found in the 1986 report *Cornerstone of Competition* by the Southern Governors' Association Advisory Council on International Education. Both reports acknowledge that our lives are interconnected with countries around the world. Our marketplace spans the globe where daily news events take place in countries which few Americans can locate. As a pervasive goal, education should better equip our students to understand the world in which we live.

On January 27, 1987, Governor Baliles called attention to this issue in his address to the Association of Virginia Colleges:

> Has our educational system become a sanctuary from the world, from

other cultures? It would seem so. There is an uncomfortably large number of supposedly educated Americans blissfully unaware of the world's complexities and unable to do much about them. Each day we pay a political and economic price for our inability to understand and communicate with our global neighbors.

International education introduces students to substantive knowledge and information about the world. This perspective encourages students to understand their own world views, to find information about world problems, and to participate in their local, national, and international environments.

We need to establish a coalition of faculty to share what courses have been written and to encourage the development and use of more, to teach our communities of the necessity of the U.S. remaining competitive in the world market, and to stress the need for cultural understanding to reduce conflict and maintain peace.

When, or while, that is being accomplished, we might also consider what impact lack of cultural understanding is having within our own borders on integrating the minority cultures into the general population.

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Committee on the Future of the Virginia Community College System. *Toward the Year 2000: The Future of the Virginia Community College System*. 1988.

Nancy Sandberg is Dean of Instruction and Student Development at Paul D. Camp Community College.

Rita Krasnow is Professor of Sociology at Virginia Western Community College.

The Poetry Reading

Christ! It's a hundred degrees in this room
and simmering with
reluctant undergraduates. Their ages flit
over rows and copulate
like orchard birds. Tool and dye maker's daughter,
you push up your sleeves.
(No, you're too small for this, nearly forty too old.)

Facing them, leaning in, nothing held back out
of nonchalance. Fast you hold them with
raised pistol hand and little finger smoking. You
conduct your voice with a beckoning
hand, your phrases curling into questions
everyone answers correctly.

Robert Lesman
Northern Virginia Community College

Putting Vision into Reality: A Model for Employee Participation and Empowerment

by Tom Wilkinson, Peggy Atkins, Bridget Franklin, and Carol Smith

New River Community College, located in Southwestern Virginia, serves over 155,000 citizens of the New River Valley who reside in the counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and the city of Radford. It has a current enrollment of 3,800 students and slightly more than 2,000 full-time equivalent students whose average age is 28 years.

The Learning Resource Center (LRC), an essential component in the educational efforts of the college, operates the college library and provides services in the areas of independent/extended learning, audiovisuals, faculty development, distance education (including teleconferencing), tutoring, and note-taking.

The Model Program

In January 1986, efforts were initiated to improve the level, quality, responsiveness, and adaptability of LRC services to meet the changing needs of the college's students, faculty, staff, and the community. Central to these efforts is a theme of employee involvement and empowerment. Employees are urged to participate in the problem solving and decision making process, to take ownership of their jobs, and to reach their potential as contributing members of a team.

At the heart of employee involvement and empowerment efforts is a firm belief that people make a difference. The human resources of the LRC are considered the organization's most valuable assets and the only ones which appreciate in value. When people are empowered to use their human potential, improvement in the performance of the organization can occur. Based on this belief, a climate was established and is continuing to evolve that is intended to create an atmosphere of trust and teamwork, enhance the problem-solving and decision making capabilities of employees, better use the unique skills and talents of employees, and improve communication between employees and among departments. We also aim to push decision making down to the lowest possible level, improve job satisfaction, increase employee knowledge

levels, and improve the level and quality of products and services.

The process of involving and empowering employees of the LRC is ongoing and composed of a variety of activities which have substantially improved the level and quality of services and products.

The first step in the process of empowering people was to believe in the process and commit to seeing it through. Change is never easy; giving up power is sometimes disconcerting for managers, and accepting power and responsibility makes some employees uncomfortable. However, for the process to work, everyone in the organization needed to be committed to its success. Meetings were held with LRC managers, all LRC employees, and top college administrators to review the process and to gain commitment from those involved.

A major step in creating a new sense of service and quality in the LRC was to re-examine the center's purpose and to establish a vision of what employees wanted the LRC to be. Discussions on the mission of the college and the LRC were held during weekly staff meetings as a means to identify the potential of the LRC. Center managers focused on medium- and long-range needs of the college and on opportunities for the LRC. Activities stressing the importance of quality service and customer satisfaction were held to reaffirm the LRC's service orientation. Finally, two half-day mission and visioning sessions involving all LRC employees were conducted to discuss the purposes and responsibilities of the LRC and to establish an employee-based vision of what the LRC would be. These sessions resulted in a mission statement and the following goal: the Learning Resource Center of New River Community College will be recognized nationally as a model for community college learning resource programs in providing quality resources and services.

The human resources of an organization are the only resources that appreciate in value, all others depreciate. Considering this, the staff development effort, a major emphasis of the empowerment process, featured seminars and workshops conducted for LRC staff in personality style, listening style, teamwork and problem solving. Employees were encouraged to learn more about themselves and about each other so that they could better work together as a team, and they were encouraged to attend seminars, workshops and conferences off-campus as well as visit other colleges to gain insights into how other organizations operate.

To become effective, the LRC's structure must reflect its opportunities as well as its responsibilities. Consequently, four units were encouraged to expand their services and operations, with each unit taking ownership of its particular services and enhancing the level and quality. Each unit also sought to complement the other units, making for a united and comprehensive organization. As a result, productivity in all four units increased. Employees are encouraged to solve problems and make decisions when possible.

Since effective communication is important to the empowerment process, great effort is made to insure that everyone is aware of what is going on not only in the LRC but also

in the college and at the state level as well. Shared information is shared knowledge. Management Team meetings are held every Monday to review the status of current projects and the week's plan of action, and to discuss any problems or concerns that need to be addressed. Weekly staff meetings are also held with the entire staff to review activities and discuss problems. Emphasis is placed on listening so that people understand what is being said. To obtain feedback from users, the LRC regularly surveys clients and patrons.

In addition to the enhanced problem solving and decision making skills, employee involvement has also generated a greater understanding of roles and responsibilities; this has increased understanding of the total operation and has provided a caring and concerned organization.

Specific employee involvement and empowerment activities included the introduction of a Circonference Quality Circle in February 1986 which established special project teams. The first project was to improve the level of LRC evening services. Twenty-five reasons why LRC evening services were not as effective as day services were identified. Solutions were suggested and implemented. Today the current evening operation is rated as much more effective.

Faced with a shortage of personnel, Circonference initiated a comprehensive program to more effectively obtain, train, and retain college work-study students. This program resulted in a savings of almost $42,000 and a national award from the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) and the USX Foundation. Of equal importance was the transfer of involvement and empowerment from LRC staff members to student assistants. The Circonference Quality Circle has shared its efforts with other colleges and made a presentation at the 1987 Virginia Community College Association convention.

In addition to the Circonference Quality Circle, the LRC has also established special "project teams" to place concentrated effort on solving critical problems. Because the LRC is functionally aligned into three specialized units – Audiovisual Services, Library Services, and Independent Learning Services – care is taken to assure that each unit is represented on a project team, regardless of the problem area. Each project team addresses a specific problem, over a specific time, and makes specific recommendations for solving that problem.

The efforts of one project team, the Redwood Project, have resulted in a five-year plan to improve the collection and over $110,000 in funding raised through private sources. The Cypress team developed a master plan to automate operations of the LRC via microcomputers, and as funding is available, components of the plan will be added. The LRC recently converted to a computerized circulation system of its library holdings based on the team's recommendations.

The involvement of all employees in as much of the planning and decision making process and in as many LRC activities as possible has been the primary thrust of effort. Since a goal is to establish an organization of thinking

employees where teamwork is the norm, employees are also encouraged to participate in college committees and activities to gain a better understanding of the entire college.

To become more effective, the operation of the Learning Resource Center was examined for appropriateness and efficiency of service. Wherever possible, the structure was simplified enabling more employee involvement and better service to customers. Bureaucracy was reduced and destructive conditions, such as unnecessary authorizations, paperwork, and privileges were eliminated. As much as possible, the LRC became a flexible organization, able to respond to changing demands and situations. The four departments of the LRC are structured to maximize their potential while complementing each other.

Employees have also developed a five-year plan of action which reflects the college's master plan and is based on the LRC mission statement. Each year the entire LRC staff reviews the accomplishments of the past year and establishes an action plan for the coming year, which reflects the college goals for the year and serves as a basis for additional planning and decision making by LRC employees. The plan takes into account the LRC's critical needs and requirements to provide services. Quarterly evaluations ensure that the LRC is focused on achieving its desired results. An evaluation at the end of the year provides data to determine how well goals and objectives are being met.

It is important to the success of the LRC that employees believe their work has meaning and purpose and that it is something in which they can take pride. The LRC produced its own brochure as an identity piece and produces a college-wide periodical dedicated to the teaching and learning process. The LRC also looks for success, rewards it, and enjoys it. Within the past three years, the LRC has received four national awards: three for video production, and one for cost-reduction activities. The LRC also received a state award for outstanding achievement in education for its "Video Store Connection" project. In addition, the LRC continually receives letters of appreciation from clients. These letters are shared with all employees.

To insure that the empowerment process continues, it is important to nurture the process. Readings are taken through activities such as "management by walking around" and careful listening to employees. Employees are continually encouraged to use their skills and knowledge to solve problems and make decisions. Excellent work is rewarded through recognition. The process is supported through presentations to top college administrators and presentations by employees at conferences and seminars.

Results

The employee involvement and empowerment program is successfully accomplishing its objectives. Employee feedback from the August 1988 retreat indicated a real sense of trust and teamwork. Frontline employees are making decisions, consciously questioning methods, and seeking better solutions to problems.

Employees are recognizing latent talents and putting them to use, communication is more open, and leaders are emerging. Employees recently indicated a high sense of job satisfaction, and the level and quality of products and services has improved.

Specific results achieved since the implementation of the employee involvement and empowerment efforts include improved evening services, an improved security system, a collection development plan which resulted in an asset growth from $15,665 in 1986 to more than $81,000 in 1988, and over $110,000 in private funding to support library collection development. We have also seen a 36% increase in circulation, a 27% increase in the number of clients served, and the initiation of an independent learning program resulting in 229 students completing course work during the first year of the program. Furthermore, we have a 242% increase in the enrollment of independent learning students from the first year to second year of the program, a new college teleconference service resulting in 375 individuals being served during the program's first year, a self-sufficient copier system, and a training program for work-study students resulting in an annual savings of almost $42,000. The list goes on and on.

Employee involvement and empowerment efforts will continue to be nurtured, and as new employees enter the LRC, they will become part of the process. Hopefully, as employees leave the LRC, they will carry the seed for employee empowerment with them. The process itself will be continually examined, tuned, and adjusted to maintain a flexible, adaptive, and responsive organization designed to meet the changing needs of community college education.

A Model for Employee Participation and Empowerment

The Learning Resource Center of New River Community College uses a basic 12 part plan to encourage employee participation and empowerment that can be implemented by any organization to enhance its level of quality and production.

Commit to empowering people
Envision your purpose
Develop employees
Encourage ownership
Communicate, listen, and learn
Emphasize teamwork
Involve people
Structure for effectiveness
Plan for success
Instill pride
Nurture the process
Anticipate change

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Support Staff Development: A Critical Link in Student Retention

by Sharon Fisher, Tamyra Kennedy, Barbara Fuller, Linda Moore, Michael Rush, and Debbie Seymore

According to *The "Ins and Outs" of Marketing and Retention in Virginia's Community Colleges,* "Retention is what happens when improved programs and services lead to student success." Keeping that definition in mind, three community colleges have joined together to enrich one of the most important service links – the support staff to students – utilizing workshop materials designed specifically for college support staff.

The 1989 Virginia Community Colleges Association convention provided an opportunity for the three colleges to present the training materials and relate support staff dynamics and personal reflections from workshops. It also gave others the chance to see how several colleges can work together cooperatively, sharing ideas and resources and yet maintaining their own unique qualities.

A Cooperative Effort

Southwest Virginia Community College, Virginia Highlands Community College, and Mountain Empire Community College serve the far western region of the Commonwealth. In this mountainous area, individuality and cooperation are common traits. The colleges have a strong history of working together in areas as diverse as economic development, student outcomes assessment, and professional development.

Most recently, they teamed with Clinch Valley College (CVC) in a CVC coordinated Funds for Excellence student retention program. Through this program, the four colleges jointly purchased the Noel/Levitz "Connections" Customer Service Training Program materials. This investment was based upon the strong belief that support staff are a critical link in the chain of factors affecting student retention.

The cooperation found among the colleges was also evident within the colleges. Support staff and administrators at each school worked together to design their own program format. This effort was strongly endorsed by each college president, and on all campuses

the training was conducted during the regularly scheduled day.

Unique Approaches

The characteristic of cooperation is only surpassed in southwest Virginia by the strong need to "do it our way." Each college developed a training program based upon available resources, campus climate, and logistical considerations.

Mountain Empire Community College (MECC) kicked off the support staff Connections workshops in the spring of 1989. Co-chairs of the Association for Classified Employees (the campus professional organization for support staff) and three administrators designed the program with additional input from other members of the classified staff.

A great deal of emphasis was put into the logistics of the workshops. A professional personnel consultant was hired to conduct the training following the request of the support staff for an off-campus person as the workshop leader. The sessions were held in a meeting room of a local restaurant. It was felt that a location away from the campus would prove to be more conducive to participation by allowing individuals to get away from the office, the telephone, and other interruptions.

Employees were divided into three groups of about eighteen people. Selections for the groups were made on a random basis, with the condition that all offices had someone in them at all times to serve students. Attendance was mandatory.

Two-hour sessions were held once a week for each group over a period of three consecutive weeks. This time frame allowed individuals to practice what they learned in the workshop. The times for the group meetings were rotated so that each attended one morning session, one luncheon session, and one afternoon session.

Evaluation results of the workshops indicated strong support for the program. Participants reported that the discussion with other staff members was the most valuable part of the experience. Following the final session, MECC's president presented each participant with a certificate of completion.

MECC sought outside funding for the training. A grant from the Virginia Community College Association provided funding for the professional trainer and a portion of the materials cost. This allowed training for the trainers. Workshop leaders from Southwest Virginia Community College and Virginia Highlands Community College attended the MECC sessions for their orientation. Additional funding from the MECC Educational Foundation and the Association for Classified Employees provided refreshments and luncheons at the sessions.

The Connections program for Southwest Virginia Community College (SVCC) was conducted by the Continuing Education Program Developer and the Retention Coordinator from SVCC. It was determined the support staff felt they were not actively involved during pre-service days. Hence, eighty support staff members were divided into four groups, with each group participating in two-hour sessions for three days

during pre-service. The two group facilitators worked with two groups on a staggered schedule.

Participation in the program was mandatory for all support staff personnel. The President, Dean of Instruction, and Student Development Services enthusiastically endorsed the program and provided encouragement.

During the course of the training, program participants became more aware of the job responsibilities and challenges of their co-workers. As a result of this awareness, individual staff members began to examine their own attitudes and performance standards as they related to co-workers and students.

Evaluations of the program revealed the self-examination aspect was of tremendous value. The support staff realized how each individual contributes to the creation of a concerned and caring climate at their institution. The facilitators felt very strongly that the Connections program started the seed of putting quality service into action.

Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) utilized staff from the Personnel Office, Academic Support Services, and Counseling to present the Connections materials prior to the beginning of the fall semester of 1989. Each of these staff members had been or presently was classified staff. Each presenter was a volunteer, so that their enthusiasm for the project would be obvious to each participant group. Staff were allowed to choose from three presentation times over three consecutive days, but attendance was required.

A special feature of the VHCC workshops was that the administration participated in the same activities concurrently. Although separate from the classified staff, the administrators were exposed to the same materials and activities. The basis for this approach was to demonstrate in a meaningful way the VHCC administration's commitment to quality student services from all support personnel. Participation from the group of administrators was spirited and was described as "very valuable" by the group.

The activities that were evaluated to be the most productive were the discussions of the videos and the statements of appreciation for fellow workers. The latter activity clearly demonstrated to all group members the power of positive communications. Further, it revealed positive attitudes that might have otherwise gone unexpressed.

A Backward Glance

One of the most beneficial aspects of a cooperative effort is the ability to share the best, and sometimes worst, parts of an experience. The three colleges have had the opportunity to look back at their endeavor with plenty of comments from the support staff, administrators, and the workshop facilitators. The colleges have found that some aspects of one college's program were stronger than another's, and vice versa. What follows is a summary of these strengths and weaknesses.

All three colleges agreed that interaction with co-workers was the most meaningful part of the training. This may point to a need to give greater emphasis to support staff development.

Although support from the top was extremely evident on all three campuses, the participation of administrators in the same training, at the same time, was the most meaningful way to show commitment to quality student service. The Connections Training focused on the importance of good communication and good working relationships on campuses, something that needs to be emphasized to all campus personnel – support staff, administrators, and faculty.

To affect the total environment, the staffs of other agencies working on the campuses, such as JTPA or privat. security agencies, should also be included in the training. These agencies also deal with students, and their autonomy may not be understood by students or visitors to the campus. Another possibility for the program would be to include work-study students. These students have a paramount effect on other students with whom they come into contact in their work-study capacity.

Conducting the workshops over several weeks, rather than several days, allowed the participants to practice techniques they had learned in previous sessions, observe their own behavior and the behavior of others, and discuss these experiences the following session. Holding the sessions off-campus proved to be positive for the morale of the staff. Additionally, it prevented them from being interrupted periodically throughout the sessions. A physical distance from the campus alleviates some anxieties.

Mandatory attendance by all support staff is also necessary. Those most reluctant to attend may also be the ones with the greatest need for customer relations training. It was also found to be important that the participants stay with the same group throughout the sessions. When individuals went from group to group, there was a need to rebuild the group structure as different members were added.

Having in-house trainers proved to be the best approach which provided for ownership of the program and enhanced continuity and follow-up training sessions. A culminating activity, with dinner or the awarding of certificates, was also found to be a worthwhile human relations activity for the staff and the importance of their role on the college campus.

What We Learned

The factors which affect students remaining in college until completion of a certificate, diploma, or degree are numerous. Retention studies do point to the importance of students being able to identify with a person on the campus, whether that person is faculty member, administrator, or support staff. The support staffs of the colleges are on the front line of retention. Whether they are division secretaries, fiscal technicians in the business office, or a housekeeping workers, they often make the first impression on potential students.

The participants generally entered the first session with apprehension and resignation; staff development activities are thought by many to have missed the mark on occasion. The Connections workshops overcame the inertia that many required meetings engender. The overall impression of all

three colleges was that the activity was positive, meaningful, and worthy of continuing.

Where We Go From Here

Student retention is a serious issue among community colleges. It is an issue that requires institution-wide strategies that affect personnel, programs, and services. Customer relations is recognized as only one aspect of this mix, but businesses have shown us it is a very important aspect. Follow-up activities and continuation plans are being developed. They include annual follow-ups, activities to orient new personnel, and video messages directly to students. On each of the three campuses—Mountain Empire, Southwest, and Virginia Highlands—you can be sure the continuation of the Connections motif will have its own characteristic flavor.

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Barbara Fuller is Continuing Education Program Developer at Southwest Virginia Community College, and **Linda Moore** is Retention Coordinator at Southwest.

Michael Rush is Coordinator of Academic Services at Virginia Highlands Community College, and **Debbie Seymore** is Personnel Officer at Virginia Highlands.

Bigdaddy's Train Wreck, 1939

Danger crossed Bigdaddy's mind all right
but not with any warning bells. Conductor
of a cautious-moving thirty cars of freight,
he stepped toward the end to take a look
and spoke an off-hand word to the passenger –
a cattleman, who on this trip rode herd
on herefords from the cupola of a Cotton Belt
caboose; the guest was mighty pleased
with the rolling bunkhouse ride,
the horsehair pads and coal fire smell
that lingered on in the oily wood,
and the tall conductor with the ready laugh.
His herd would make Fort Worth if he would not.
For both those men
something soporific in the fog
softened all the passing woods and fields
until it seemed they rode within a cloud,
and sure enough they did; it had an easy
railroad sway, and the near-hypnotic clacking
of the rails affirmed – all's well, all's well.

Peering from the platform out behind,
Bigdaddy stood at the breakman's wheel.
At first disaster must have seemed unreal
emerging through all shades of white and gray
to arrive so fast at fatal black he hadn't
time to think – should have dropped those flares –
but only shouted – "Jump!"
and jumped himself. He leaped, khakis flared,
postured like one crucified but with no cross,
then tumbled through weeds and road-bed rock,
insensible for that one moment more to the world
beyond the bruising granite turbulence,
and then his body stopped –
stopped in time for the last of a long
whistle cry, the screech of steel on steel
more awful to his ear than a falling bomb
because he knew exactly where
the locomotive mass was going to hit
and everything about to come apart
because of it. He might as well,
and would just as soon,
have kept on rolling downward for a year.

S. E. Simpson
Rappahannock Community College
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Focus on Computer Communications

Toward Better Communication

by Richard J. Medell

As I recall all of the Virginia Community Colleges Association (VCCA) conventions I have attended, I seem to remember that a bone of contention for many who attended was the lack of suitable communication tools to be able to quickly conduct the business of the Association during the subsequent academic year. Despite the availability of SCATS telephone lines and our much maligned U. S. Postal Service, conversations generally could only be held after much telephone tag, and sometimes mail was lost, mislaid or delivered too late.

Whereas the VCCA is not alone in seeking solutions to provide better communication capability, much of industry and, indeed, many colleges and universities have ameliorated this situation by utilizing electronic mailbox facilities. By invitation and subtle prodding by Dr. Cheryl Creager, the then President Elect of the VCCA, I found myself on the VCCA annual convention agenda held in Roanoke in October 1989. Suitably, my topic was "Introduction to IBM's Professional Office System (PROFS), and the Because It's Time Network, or BITNET."

I was fortunate to be able to be on the agenda twice for 50 minute presentations; this article recaps the concepts presented at the convention and develops salient points.

PROFS is touted by IBM as a communication tool which allows us to get accurate, complete, and timely information at the touch of a key—so an organization can arrive at decisions more efficiently and effectively. The Virginia Community College Network (VCCNet) purchased and installed this

system several years ago. Currently, over 700 VCCS administrators, faculty, and staff are registered users of PROFS.

Besides having a valid log-on to access PROFS, users also need access to a 3270-type terminal or PC and minimal keyboarding skills. As the VCCS community continues to acquire more terminals and PC's at each campus, such equipment access is feasible for all, and keyboarding skill has come to be as necessary in today's world as a driver's license.

Functionally, PROFS allows users to

- send and receive notes and messages;
- maintain a personal calendar;
- get automatic reminders of important events;
- schedule meetings and conference rooms;
- process documents - DW370;
- store and retrieve notes and documents.

All of the PROFS systems are operating within the VCCS to some degree and learning these can be enjoyable. To facilitate this, each of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Regional Coordinators, including myself as Information Center Manager, is available for hands-on workshops at college locations and, of course, for continuing consultation.

The PROFS documentation includes the following.

- *Using the Professional Office System*, SH20-6979. This manual must be purchased from IBM. When ordering, make sure you ask that it be added to your college's SLSS listing. This will insure that you get future manual updates automatically.
- *User's Guide to the VCCNet*, September 1989. Pages 120-123 give a short description of the functions available when using PROFS and/or the word processing function of PROFS, DW370. Copies of this guide are available by contacting your college's data processing liaison.
- *NETNEWS* - February through May 1989 issues. Each of these monthly *NETNEWS* contains 4-5 page articles on important considerations when using PROFS within the VCCS community. *NETNEWS* is sent over PROFS on the first working day of each month to all currently registered PROFS users. If you do not have the above issues, contact your college's data processing liaison.

Significantly, the VCCA has an established PROFS logon called VCCAOFCE that will be used by an outside management consultant to coordinate VCCA management functions. Additionally, a PROFS logon called VCCAMEET will be used to publicize all VCCA calendar events of the year. This calendar, like all PROFS calendars, can be viewed by any PROFS user.

BITNET is something else!

BITNET is a rapidly growing communications network that links over 2500 computers (nodes) at universities and research centers worldwide. Using PROFS, the VCCS can communicate with other systems and special academic interest groups all over the globe at no cost. Some of these groups

include ISAAC – the Information System for Advanced Academic Computing; *AIR* – a newsletter for institutional research and planning personnel; *XCULT-L* – an international intercultural newsletter; SLART-L – second or foreign language acquisition; *MEDNEWS* – a weekly summary of medical news; *PSYCHNET* – a weekly newsletter for the psychology community; and *SCUP* – a newsletter for people interested in college and university planning. The above is just a short list of the many groups available that can be subscribed to at no cost through BITNET, via PROFS.

The VCCS published the *User's Guide to Accessing BITNET* in August 1989. Copies of this document can be obtained from your college's data processing liaison person.

Information about PROFS is available that allows you to see a complete list of computer installations currently on BITNET. The name of the list is *BITNODES*.

BITNET is currently in transition. The management of both BITNET and CSNET, the network of computer science departments, voted in 1989 to merge into a single network called *CREN*, the Corporation for Research and Educational Networking. This merger provides a larger user base. So far, this merger has not caused the VCCS to make any changes in network access.

Currently, VCCNet personnel are working on procedures which will allow VCCS personnel to communicate with academic colleagues with INTERNET addresses instead of BITNET addresses. Just imagine the communication avenues which will then be available!

Richard J. Mendell is the Information Center Manager for the Virginia Community College System.

Call for Poetry

For the Next Issue
of the *VCCA Journal*

If an IBM compatible computer is used to prepare the poem, we would appreciate the loan of a disk with the text. Please note the word processing program used.

Deadline for all submissions:
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Blue Ridge Community College
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Harrington's Corner

Some of My Best Friends Are Called "Adjunct"

by Dick Harrington

While a young woman was telling of a bad experience with a man, an "adjunct" friend of mine blurted, "Kill the SOB. Turn him into an adjunct."

The word suggests a stumpy appendage like a third arm stuck on between the shoulder blades. It functions as an arm, to be sure, but it feels out of place, and the other arms aren't quite sure what to make of it.

My same friend startled me last Friday when she said, "I've been teaching here almost three years now, and today is the first time I really feel like *faculty*." Of course we talked.

She said she's always felt welcome at the college. Faculty and staff are cordial and accommodating. The atmosphere seems inviting and warm. We show respect and appreciation for her work. She likes the college and feels privileged to teach here.

Her feeling of not being faculty, then – where does it come from?

Our relationship as colleagues and friends began several years ago when she phoned me from the university nearby, saying she was interested in community college teaching and wanted to gain experience while completing her master's. She served a year with me as a teaching intern.

Since then, she's taught developmental writing, college writing, American literature, and British literature. She knows the material extremely well and relates to diverse students with a compelling combination of invitation, challenge, and nurture. Her students respect and appreciate her. She earns their praise.

Despite teaching three courses per semester, to get by she works two other jobs – as an editor for a blind novelist and as a landscape gardener. She loves teaching and is willing, as all teachers must be, to work very hard and effectively for much less than she and the job are worth.

She even takes time for professional collegiality. On campus she interacts readily with faculty and staff. Off campus she meets periodically with colleagues to discuss teaching and related professional matters. Teaching one another fosters excellence.

Last evening I went with her and other friends to see Beckett's "Krapp's Last Tape," a one-time performance in an oriental rug store. She'd invited me because she thought I'd appreciate it. I did, partly because she knows the play and Beckett better than I.

Even so, she has not felt like faculty.

Her feeling of apartness has something to do with transience and uncertainty. She never knows from semester to semester whether she'll have courses to teach or get bumped by a full-timer whose section doesn't make. She knows full-time jobs rarely come open here, and when a job does open, over a hundred teachers will apply. She'd like to plan her life, but . . .

Some will ask her, "Why don't you get a real job?" She will, just as she'll get her Ph.D. She's begun a very distinguished career. She's also a wonderful story teller. What might we have done – besides calling her other than "adjunct" – so years hence her "adjunct" stories sound less like graphic recollections of an army physical?

Dick Harrington, who teaches English at Piedmont Virginia Community College, served as the first President of the Virginia Community Colleges Association.

(for Jeff Hockaday)

hardball

he steps toward you
in one smooth motion
like an all-pro shortstop
going down on one knee
for a slow grounder
glides into your space
reaches for your hand
squeezes just short
of crushing the bones
looks straight in your eye
tells you the honest to god truth
listens when you squeeze back
squeezes harder so you
want to say uncle or
maybe just thanks jeff
for treating us like
men and women you're
filling the stands having
one helluva season

Dick Harrington

The Sixties

We wanted songs (heard with beer
in a frozen stubble field beyond
a rigid town of six thousand) in
which the boy says he must be
moving on because, though the girl
loves him and wanted the baby
she thought she was pregnant with
by him, he knows he's no good
for her because he's a wanderer
at heart (with guitar) and
he's just saving her the pain
that would be worse if he stayed.
Yeh.

Robert Lesman
Northern Virginia Community College

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